

STOREFRONT EVENTS

TUESDAY, MARCH 8
6:00–8:00 PM
OPENING RECEPTION

TUESDAY, MARCH 22

7:30 PM / FREE
THE MOVIES OF YVES KLEIN
TO RESERVE A SEAT PLEASE WRITE TO RSVP@STOREFRONTNEWS.ORG WITH THE SUBJECT HEADING “STOREFRONT FILMS”.

MAYA DEREN THEATER
ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 SECOND AVE AT SECOND ST
THIS EVENT HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE IN PART BY AMERICAN APPAREL. SEE NEXT COLUMN FOR DETAILS.

DURING A CONVERSATION

Yves Klein

During a conversation on architecture with Professor Boucharts, I suddenly asked him the following question: What is architecture? With some difficulty he answered, “It is space, limited by protective partitions to protect the private life in which we live.”

I retorted that, in my opinion, one could not add anything to space. Architecture is space and that is all (that is that).

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INTERVIEW WITH PIERRE RESTANY

Paris, May 7, 2003

Pierre Restany (1930–2003) was an art critic. He founded the New Realists and was Yves Klein’s biographer.

François Perrin: What was Air Architecture for you?

Pierre Restany: All the same, the fact is that [Werner] Ruhnau experienced this utopia. He experienced it from within. [Claude] Parent illustrated the concepts of Klein’s utopia, so to speak. He accepted it, even showed enthusiasm, but did not initiate it. The same goes for Tallon. That is why I told you about a sort of co-ownership as to the origin of this idea. He had vaguely conceived of the need for a school of sensibility but maybe it was for populist reasons and strategies in communication. You must not forget that scandal prevailed all during Klein’s career. He rejected his close surroundings—that is to say, the “artistic scene”—apart from a few exceptions, which are important, in fact, but he went on living in disagreement with these ideas as if the fact of listing them one after the other would cause a sort of mental rash for his readers. He always kept to that idea. However, it did not prevent him from having a special relationship with Parent and artists such as [Lucio] Fontana and [Piero] Manzoni. He was intensely aware of there being a deep structural hostility against his ideas, and in some of his writings one feels that he fought against that. Therefore, the more he was involved in the continuance of his work and his destiny, the fate of his destiny, the more, at regular periods, he wanted to explode. In his case this corresponded to a new moment of continuity, which progressively came into being and which he endeavored to explain. You cannot imagine how many times I listened to him, how many times he asked me to give him some advice particularly concerning the meaning of some of the words he used, for example, in his Chelsea Hotel Manifesto. I remember that he sent me a cable from New York to ask me if he had to justify himself. I told him that it was not necessary... This type of utopian way of thinking receives great attention in this part of Europe. If you classify a logic of revision as utopian, that is enough for it to be devalued...

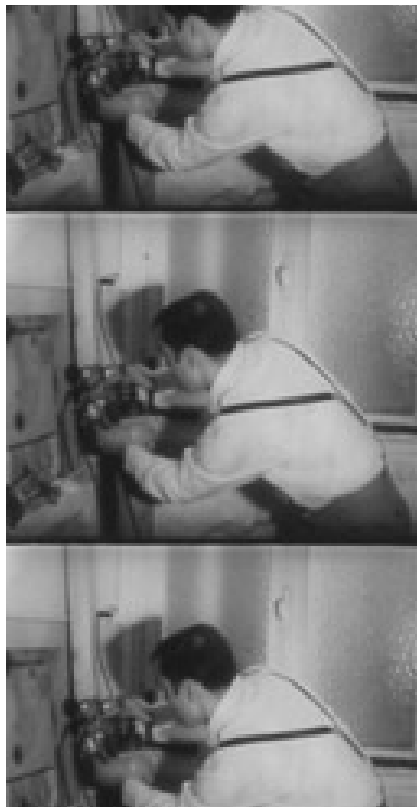
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THE MOVIES OF YVES KLEIN

17 SHORT FILMS B/W AND COLOR. SILENT. 8MM. 1953–1962 16 OR 35MM, YVES KLEIN (1928–1962), WAS NOT A DIRECTOR. BUT DURING HIS PRACTICE, HE IMAGINED AND ASKED PROFESSIONALS FROM THE GAUMONT STUDIO IN PARIS TO SHOOT SOME OF HIS PERFORMANCES AND EPHEMERAL PIECES. THESE FILMS HAVE BEEN RECENTLY RESTORED FOR THE YVES KLEIN ARCHIVES BY THE POMPIDOU CENTRE IN PARIS.

PROGRAM

- YVES KLEIN PRACTICES JUDO IN JAPAN.
- YVES KLEIN WORKING ON HIS MURALS FOR THE GEISENKIRCHEN OPERA.
- “ANTHROPOMETRIES OF THE BLUE PERIOD” PERFORMANCE AT GALLERIE DE FRANCE
- “DIMANCHE 27 NOVEMBRE” EDITION OF THE NEWSPAPER.
- YVES KLEIN PRODUCING ANTHROPOMETRIES WITH A MODEL
- YVES KLEIN TESTING THE AIR ROOF
- PRESENTATION OF THE AIR ARCHITECTURE PROJECT DURING THE SHOW “ANTAGONISMS 2”
- “YVES KLEIN. PROPOSITIONS MONOCHROMES” EXHIBITIONS AT CALLENDY AND I CLERT
- EXHIBITION OF THE VOID AT IRIS CLERT GALLERY
- OPENING OF THE GEISENKIRCHEN OPERA
- SPONGE RELIEFS
- “MONOCHROME AND FIRE” SHOW IN KREFELD, PROTOTYPE OF THE FIRE COLUMN AND WALL.
- YVES KLEIN PRODUCING FIRE PAINTINGS
- WEDDING OF ROTRAUT Uecker AND YVES KLEIN
- STUDIO/APPARTEMENT OF YVES KLEIN



Air Roof Experiment, Kopperbusch Factory, Germany, 1958.

CONVERSATION

Doug Aitken and François Perrin; Venice, California, January 12–19, 2004

FP: “Air Architecture” is somehow a generic name. Yves Klein’s proposition was also a “non-architecture,” almost a negation of the object of architecture. It was more a project that deals with situation, where you adapt yourself to the environment. But what is also central to Klein’s idea was the cooperation between artists, a concept that reappeared recently through people who privileged collaboration as a work of art. DA: The idea of the artist as a producer more than a craft person is now commonplace. In mediums such as film, it’s intrinsic to the process, as with much art making. However, in Klein’s generation, this outward interaction was more rare. Of course this approach eventually blossomed with Warhol generating the Factory in a literal sense, and by the end of the twentieth century. For many artists the evolution had gone out of the studio and into a more open production system. The role of the artist mutated as well to being someone who generates a network of creativity and concepts, as opposed to the singular act of being in a void-like studio. FP: When you think about film practice in contemporary art, it is interesting because Klein was one of the first artists to document his work through films in a professional way. He would hire some cameraman from the Gaumont Studio to shoot his performances or exhibitions (in 35mm). He wanted to leave some traces of his works. DA: When I think of Klein’s work, it is really about traces and a sense of lightness, the impression of something left behind that disappears as quickly as it was there... FP: That was Klein’s idea: that his works would become ashes. DA: Of course, blue ashes...

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SPECIAL THANKS TO ROTRAUT KLEIN, MOUJAY AND DANIEL MOUJAY, PHILIPPE JALUAT AT THE YVES KLEIN ARCHIVE IN PARIS, CLAUDE PARENT, WERNER RUHNAU, ROGER TALLON, PIERRE RESTANY, SYLVIERE LOTRINGIER, JULI CARSON, MARK WIGLEY, DOUG AITKEN, MICHAEL ASHER, WILLIAM MENKING, CHARLES WILP, AXEL SCHMITZBERGER, CONNY PURTILL, LOUANNE GREENWALD AND KIMBERLI MEYER AT THE MAKCENTER IN LOS ANGELES AND PETER NOEHLER IN VIENNA. THE STUDENTS: CHRIS ALVARADO, CASSIE COBB, JEFF HASTINGS, NATHAN LEWIS AND CHARISSA SANTOS, MURIEL BARTOL, VIHN BUI AND JALAL POEHLMAN, DEWEY AMBROSIO, GWEN DEGLISE AND STEVE LACHICHY, NICOLE BATTEFORT, BRIGITTE BERG AND MARIE JAGER.

ABOUT STOREFRONT:

Founded in 1982, Storefront for Art and Architecture is a nonprofit organization committed to advancing innovative positions in art, architecture and design. Our program of exhibitions, discussions and publications is intended to provide a forum for challenging and provocative work at the intersection of art and architecture in order to generate dialogue and collaboration across geographic, ideological and disciplinary boundaries

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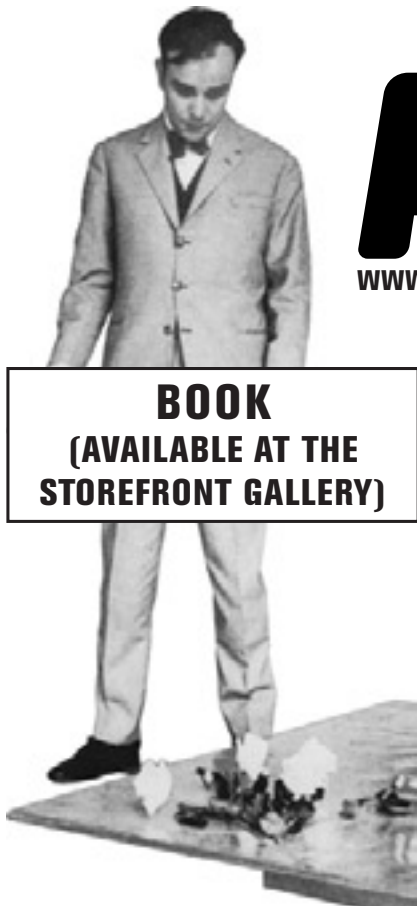
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YVES KLEIN ONCE AGAIN!



BOOK
(AVAILABLE AT THE
STOREFRONT GALLERY)

PROJECT OF AN AIR ARCHITECTURE

Yves Klein / Werner Ruhnau

Air Architecture has in our mind always been just a transitory stage, but today we present it as means for air-conditioning privileged geographical spaces. The illustration shows a proposal for protecting a city by means of a roof of flowing air. A central expressway leading to the airport divides the city into a residential section and a section for work, industry, and mechanical equipment.

The air roof regulates the temperature and at the same time protects the privileged area • There is a ground surface of transparent glass • There is an underground service area (kitchens, bathrooms, storage, and utility) • The concept of secrecy, still common in our world, has disappeared in this city, which is flooded with light and completely open to the outside • A new atmosphere of human intimacy prevails • The inhabitants live naked... • The former patriarchal structure of the family no longer exists • The community is perfect, free, individualistic, impersonal • The main activity of the inhabitants: leisure • Obstacles formerly accepted in architecture as annoying necessities have become luxuries: Fireproof walls / Waterproof walls / Airborne forms / Fire fountains / Water fountains / Swimming pools / Air mattresses, air seats

The true goal of immaterial architecture: air conditioning of vast geographic residential spaces. Rather than being accomplished by technological miracles, this temperature control will become reality through a change of human sensitivity into a function of the cosmos.

The theory of “immaterialization” negates the spirit of science fiction. The newly developed sensitivity, a new human dimension, guided by the mind, in the future will transfigure climatic and spiritual conditions on the surface of our earth.

To want means to envision. Attached to this wish is a determination to experience what one envisions, and the miracle occurs in all realms of nature.

Ben Gourion:

“He who does not believe in miracles is not a realist.”

Published in *Zero Magazine*, Düsseldorf, Germany, 1961.

LETTERS

Paris, April 22, 1902—From Claude Parent

...For Klein, architecture was rather a detail, an anecdote. What counted for him was the art of living communicating with nature becoming once more, in a very esoteric way, one of the components of nature with the fundamental elements regarded as being the only possible constituents, air, fire, water, etc. And it did not consist in a very definite type of architecture. He had no interest in walls or fences except when they were immaterial and in a romantic German context. This explains the presence of voluntarily excessive smoke volutes (on his request) in the Varsovie fountains at the Trocadero in Paris. When I suggested trails in the Paris sky he was mad with joy. The other definition, which was much more important, was the air roof; that is to say, an immaterial envelope protecting an open space where humanity would live freely (naked). A new life, a golden age. Air, void, an unlimited horizon, weightlessness; all this allowed [people] to be free and live without constraint, without any limits, without any sort of fence, without any obstacle. Weightlessness leads to virtual reality in architecture and a total fusion with nature. It seems to me that Yves Klein’s ancestors were druids, partly Niebelungen and partly Rheingold, and especially the symbolic enclosure during the crusades, the golden age of amour courtois (courtly love). Of course, he refers to King Arthur. In the world today I do not find anything like this apart from the theory called “The Function of the Oblique,” worked out by Paul Virilio and myself in 1964. Namely:

1. refuse any visible enclosure;
2. the horizon is regarded as continuous and predominant;
3. continuity, meaning that there is an unknown beginning and an uncertain end.

It is true that there is a future for these theories but we will miss the magic of Yves Klein and his power to persuade people who are under the influence of materialism. We can only believe and hope. There is something fabulous about his unfinished destiny even though we are sad about it...

YVES KLEIN

AIR ARCHITECTURE

• SELECTED TEXTS EXCERPTED FROM BOOK •

OPENING NIGHT RECEPTION
(MARCH 8, 6:00–8:00 PM)

FILM EVENT
(AT THE ANTHOLOGY
FILM ARCHIVE)

• MARCH 8 – APRIL 23, 2005 •



Fire Column, from the exhibition *Monochrome and Fire*, Museum Haus Lange Krefeld, Germany, 1961.

AIR ARCHITECTURE: IMAGINATION AND MATTER

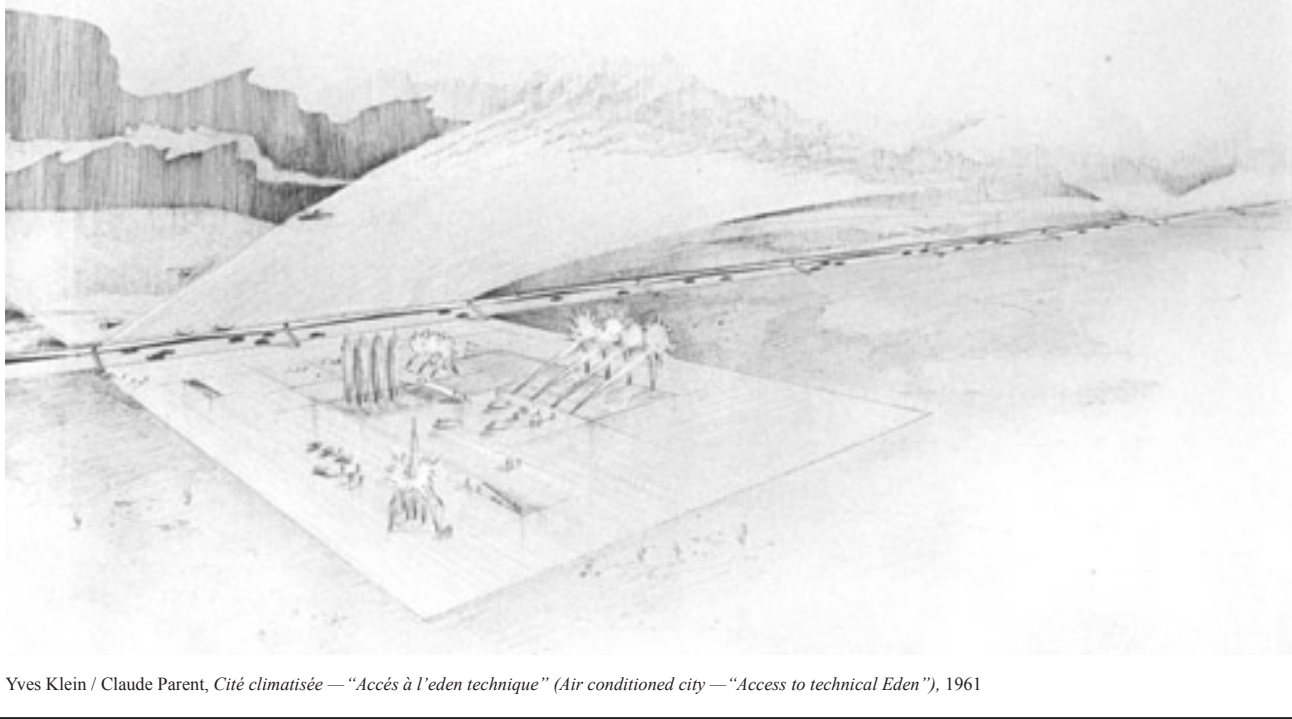
François Perrin

All the people that love the great-simplified dream, in front of a sky that is nothing but the world of “transparency,” will understand the vanity of “apparition.” For them, “transparency” will be the most realistic appearance. It will give them an intimate lesson of lucidity.—Gaston Bachelard

The architecture of the future will be for the people.—Oscar Niemeyer

Man is no longer the center of the universe, it is the universe that is the center of man.—Yves Klein

From 1957 to 1962, Yves Klein imagined the Architecture of Air: a visionary project of living environments reconnecting people with earth and its elements. It was the dream of an architecture that engaged the climate at the origin of its design process, with an ultimate goal to radically transform society. Klein’s architecture was a social project: He wanted to provide the ideal environment for humans on the planet because he was aware that despite the advent of space odyssey, the Earth and its atmosphere would be our only future...



Yves Klein / Claude Parent, *Cité climatisée*—“Accès à l’eden technique” (Air conditioned city—“Access to technical Eden”), 1961

Storefront for Art and Architecture

Hours: Tue–Sat: 11am–6pm



FIRE, OR THE FUTURE WITHOUT FORGETTING THE PAST
Yves Klein, Geisenkirchen, December 1958

The project for a public square with a pool where jets of fire would dance instead of jets of water is an idea that dates back, for me, to 1951. I was in bliss at the “Granja” summer palace of the Spanish monarchy some 60 miles from Madrid, looking at the fountains and jets of water in the gardens, similar in every respect to those of Versailles and elsewhere. That’s where I imagined replacing the elegant jets of water on the tranquil surface of the pools with brilliant jets of fire.

Why not? ...But in any case not in a hot country! The functional-psychological goal of water-jets on stretches of water is to bring a general coolness or at least a sensation of coolness. For countries with a less favorable climate, where the cold reigns long in the winter, it’s a luxury to present jets of water. Whereas it is quite functional and also aesthetic-psychological to present jets of fire on a spatial mirror base with an impassable invisible protective barrier.

That’s why today I have brought back this old project which has never been realized anywhere in the world and I’m quite astonished in truth, because fire is very archetonic or rather urban, above all in the countries of Northern Europe where a lot of construction is done today in a more avant-garde manner than in the South, and because fire is the very symbol of social being and of society in general; and even more, because in Geisenkirchen I learned that this very industrial city has long borne the surname of the “City of a Thousand Fires.”

I think that from the viewpoint of aesthetic perfection one can hardly debate the quality of fire. Fire is beautiful in itself, in whatever way. Let me rapidly take up a few reflections on fire (excerpts from *La Psychanalyse du Feu* by Bachelard).

...Fire and heat furnish means of explanation in such varied domains because they are the occasion for imperishable memories, simple and decisive personal experiences. Fire is intimate and universal. It lives in our hearts. It lives in the sky. It rises from the depths of substance... into matter and hides, latent, contained like hate and vengeance. Among all other phenomena, it is truly the only one that can so clearly receive two contrary valuations: good and evil. It shines in Paradise. It burns in hell. It is sweetness and torture. It is cuisine and apocalypse. It is pleasure for the child sitting docile before the flame; yet it punishes any disobedience when one seeks to play too closely with its flames. It is well-being and it is respect. It is a tutelary and terrible God, good and bad. It can contradict itself; thus it is one of the universal principles of explanation.

...It has perhaps never been sufficiently remarked that fire is a social rather than a natural being. To see the justification of this remark, there is no need to develop considerations on the role of fire in primitive societies, nor to insist on the technical difficulties of the maintenance of fire; it is enough to deal in positive psychology, examining the structure and education of a civilized mind.

In fact, the respect for fire is a learned respect; it is not a natural respect. The reflex that makes us pull our finger back from the flame of a candle does play any conscious role in our knowledge. One might even be astonished that it is given such importance in the school manuals, where it is offered as the eternal illustration of a sort of reflection in the reflex, a knowledge in the most brutal sensation. In reality, the social prohibitions are primary. Natural experience only comes in second place to supply unexpected material proof, too obscure to form a basis for objective knowledge. In the eyes of the child the fact of being burned, i.e., the natural inhibition, by confirming the social prohibition, simply lends more value to parental intelligence. Thus at the basis of the childhood knowledge of fire there is an interference between the natural and the social, where the social is almost always dominant. Perhaps you will see more clearly if we compare the burn and the bite. Both give rise to reflexes. But why are sharp points not, like fire an object of respect and fear? It is precisely because the social prohibitions concerning sharp points are much weaker than the prohibitions concerning fire. Here then is the true basis of the respect for flame: if the child approaches his hand to the fire, his father smacks his fingers with a ruler. Fire strikes without needing to burn. Whether flame or heat, lamp or furnace, the parents’ vigilance is the same. Fire is therefore initially the object of a general prohibition. Hence this conclusion: the social prohibition is our first general knowledge of fire. What we first know of fire is that we must not touch it. As the child grows, the prohibitions are spiritualized: the ruler blow is replaced by an angry voice by tales of fire’s danger, by legends on the fire in the sky. Thus the natural phenomenon is rapidly involved in complex and confused social knowledge, which leaves little room for naive understanding.

With the three classical elements, fire, air, and water, the classical city of tomorrow will be built, flexible at last, spiritual and immaterial. The idea in space, of using pure energy as a material with which to construct for men, no longer seems absurd in this way of thinking.

AIR CONDITIONING ON THE SURFACE OF OUR GLOBE

Yves Klein

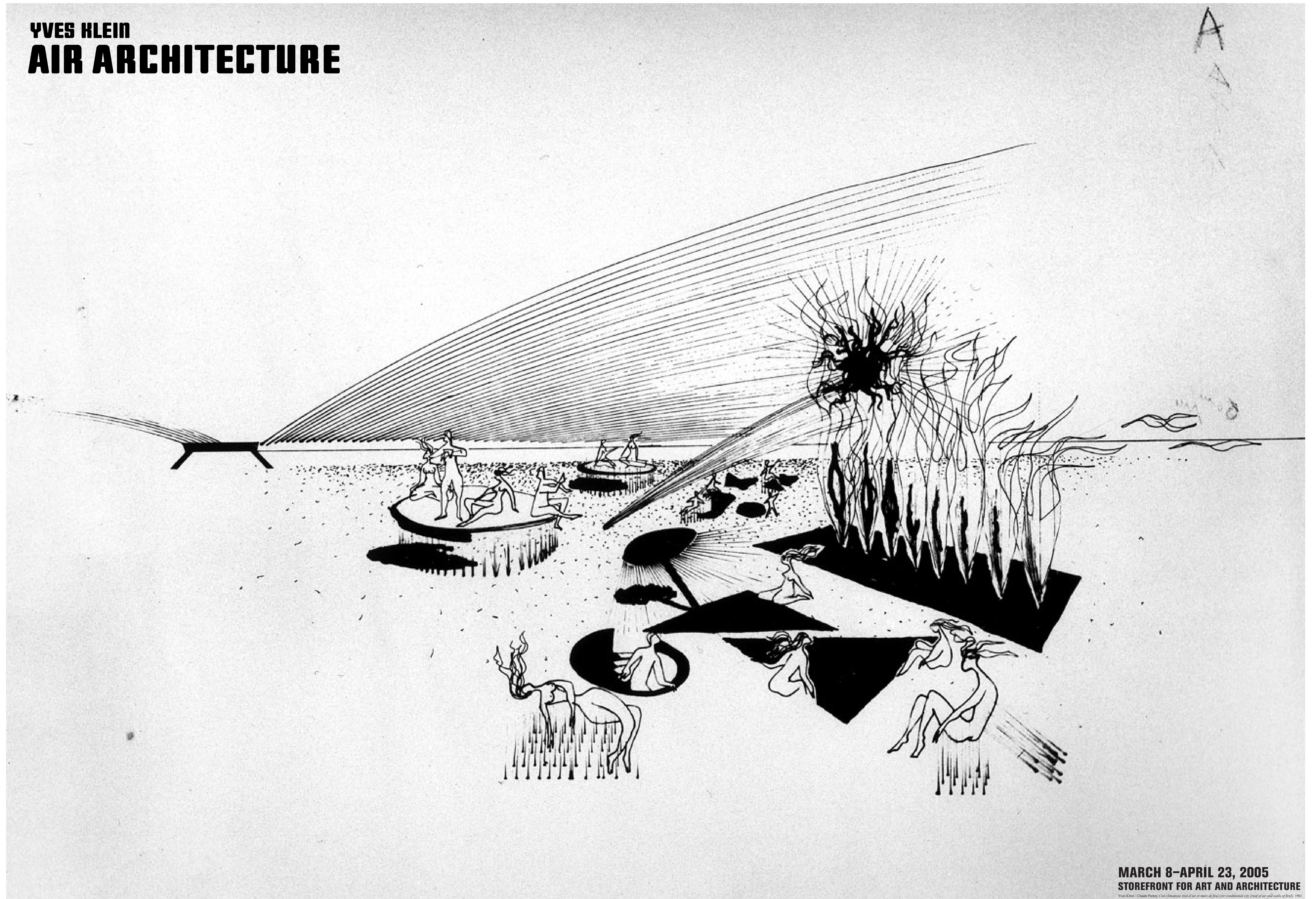
The technical and scientific conclusion of our civilization is buried in the depths of the earth and ensures the absolute control of the climate on the surface of all the continents, which have become vast communal living rooms. It is a sort of a return to the Garden of Eden, of the legend (1951).

The advent of a new society destined to undergo deep transformations in its very condition. Intimacy, both personal and in the family, will disappear. An impersonal ontology will be developed.

The wiltpower of Man will at last regulate life on a constantly “wonderful” level. Man will be so free he can even levitate! His occupation: leisure. The obstacles that traditional architecture used to put up with will be eliminated. Body care will occur through new methods, such as the “air bed”.

Yves Klein / Werner Ruhnau, *Fire Wall Experiment*, Kopperbusch Factory, Germany, 1958.

YVES KLEIN
AIR ARCHITECTURE



MARCH 8–APRIL 23, 2005
STOREFRONT FOR ART AND ARCHITECTURE
Yves Klein / Claude Parnet, *Cité climatisée (roof of air and walls of fire)*, 1961.